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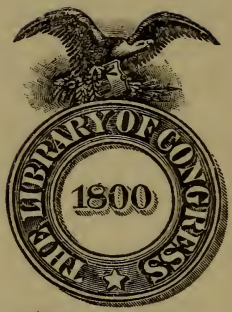

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MEMOIRS

OF

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JACOB RITTER,

A FAITHFUL MINISTER

IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY JOSEPH FOULKE.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—JOHN VI. 12.

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PREFACE.

In presenting these memoirs to the public, it may be proper to mention that the narrative of Jacob Ritter was, at his own request, committed to writing many years before his decease, and was carefully preserved among his papers. It is now, with the exception of a few verbal corrections, published in its original form. This portion of the ensuing work having, in manuscript, been submitted to the inspection of many Friends, they were of the judgment that it should appear in print; and that many additional anecdotes and striking incidents might be usefully appended. Believing, in accordance with the view frequently expressed to me by Jacob Ritter, that some remarkable occurrences of his life should be recorded for the benefit of posterity, I have endeavoured, with much pains, to collect and arrange these reminiscences concerning this beloved Friend, and trust they will be found to answer the object for which they are now offered to the public. It may be added, that Jacob Ritter being of German parentage, had retained much of his vernacular style of language; and to this circumstance the reader will trace occasional peculiarities of expression observable in the following memoirs.

JOSEPH FOULKE.

MEMORIAL

CONCERNING JACOB RITTER.

As the righteous are worthy of remembrance, it may be said of Jacob Ritter, that he endeavoured to live in the fear of the Lord, in humility, and self-abasement becoming his religious profession, not numbering himself among the great.

His original ideas, his singular comparisons, and his bright example of piety and virtue, made his ministry interesting and acceptable to Friends and those around him. Like the good Samaritan, he sympathized with the afflicted, pouring in the healing oil.

He frequently visited his friends and encouraged them to keep their ranks in the truth, (being concerned himself to do his day's work in the day time,) cautioning them against a hasty forward spirit. He was careful practically to observe the admonition of the Apostle, "to be swift to hear, but slow to speak," and in his labors he manifested no disposition to carry points, but was bold in declaring the truth. His conversation was pleasant and instructive, and his words were seasoned with grace.

His communications in meetings were not lengthy, but generally to edification and comfort, especially to

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those who were under trial of mind; towards these he manifested a deep concern for the welfare of their immortal souls.

His dress and household furniture were plain and simple, showing a good example in these respects, and manifesting himself to be a man fearing God and hating covetousness, and yet maintaining the ground of industry for his own support and that of his family. It may be truly said of him that he knew what it was to be abased, and what it was to abound, both in spiritual and temporal things, in all things giving thanks.

He entertained his friends and strangers with kindness and hospitality, being blessed with enough, and believing in the testimony of the Divine Master:—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. vi. 33.

He was a man much beloved by all who knew him. Having passed through great suffering and affliction, he was thereby enabled to sympathize with his brethren in various states and conditions, possessing, at the same time, a large share of that charity that covereth a multitude of faults.

It appears from his own account that, at one period of his life, he was like the prodigal son who had strayed far from his father's house, and had wasted his substance in riotous living; but in great mercy and loving kindness he was brought back again to

the banqueting house, where the Lord's banner over him was love. Gratitude was felt for this unmerited mercy, and he was increasingly induced to follow that spirit that leads in the way of life and salvation.

He was a diligent attender of religious meetings; solid and grave in his deportment in them; and was favored frequently to make pertinent remarks in those held for discipline. He was just and upright in his dealings among men; and, by keeping the eye of the mind single, he became "a pillar in the Lord's house that went no more out;" earnestly recommending Friends to "mind the light;" to "take heed to the life;" "to keep down to the root of love and life; to get down to the "root and foundation;" and thus be preserved in harmony and love, and united together in feeling after the blessed spirit, which is the bond of peace.

As none can rise with Christ into newness of life, but those who go down with him into baptism of suffering and death, so it was this dear Friend's experience to pass through seasons of great desertion; insomuch that he would sometimes express his feelings in the language of the Divine Master: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He would thus hold out encouragement to Friends not to shrink from suffering, because by these baptisms we are redeemed out of all evil, and fitted and prepared for the heavenly kingdom, and also for a higher state

of enjoyment in this life, even communion with our Creator.

In the latter part of his time, his hearing became dull and heavy, yet in monthly meetings he would frequently speak to the business with life and clearness, his mind being very much centered in the truth.

The last meeting he attended was on first-day the 28th of eleventh-month 1841, in which he appeared in the ministry with clearness, to the comfort and satisfaction of Friends. Soon after he was taken with a chill ; after which he gradualllly declined for about two weeks. During his illness, many Friends visited him : he remarked that it was profitable for Friends to visit one another in the life. On another occasion, he said to two Friends who visited him, "I am glad to see you: behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." At another time he expressed an earnest desire that people might be loving and kind to one another. His mind was preserved in a heavenly calm, and in this undisturbed and peaceful state he continued until one o'clock on the 15th of twelfth-month, when he passed quietly away in the 85th year of his age, being a minister nearly fifty years. His remains were interred in Friends' burial ground at Plymouth on Seventh-day the 18th, on which solemn occasion a meeting for worship was held after the interment.

JOEL LAIRE.

MEMOIRS OF JACOB RITTER.

It has many times been on my mind to leave some account of the gracious dealings of the Lord with me, and to note down some of the remarkable circumstances of my life from my youth up; and now, in the seventy-first year of my age, the remembrance of the following particulars has been brought very fresh before me.

My parents were Jacob and Elizabeth Ritter, who came from Germany; and when arrived in America, they bound themselves as servants to pay for their passage. My father served three years, and my mother four years.

When the period of their servitude was over, they married; and, taking each a small bundle on their heads, being all their worldly wealth, went out into the woods and made a settlement in what is now called Springfield, Bucks county, in

Pennsylvania. Here I was born in the year 1757. My parents were honest and industrious, and I, being their first child, was brought up inured to hardships. My father was a high spirited man, and put me to hard work as soon as I was able, and early accustomed me to the management of the grubbing hoe. My mother was always kind and tender to me.

When we had lived at Springfield for some time, my father bought a small tract of land not far off, and moved his family to it. I remember when we got to it, we found that the dwelling-house had been burned down, and nothing but the chimney left standing. My father went out to work by the day at his trade of shoemaking, in order to earn a little money, and my mother took me with her, and began to clear the land, and I became expert in chopping down trees.—Many times, after I had been thus employed, I would sit down on a stump and eat my dinner of cold pork and bread with a relish that no luxury could give; the little birds used to hop around me without fear, and I amused myself with scattering crumbs for them.

When I was about thirteen years of age, I used to love to throw myself down on the grass before my father's door of evenings, when I had finished my daily labor, and look at the sky; and when I observed the bright moon and stars, or the changing of the clouds, I would think, *surely there must be some great power that created and framed all these things;* for though I had often felt the secret touches of Divine love, yet I wist not what it was.

After an evening thus spent, I got up off the grass and went to bed; and whether I dreamed, or whether it was a vision, I cannot tell, but I found myself on the same spot which I had occupied in the evening, and I thought two men came to me clothed in white; one of them laid his hands upon my breast, and the other placed his behind my shoulders. I then perceived that they were angels, for they stretched out their wings over me, and lifted me up, telling me they would shew me the gates of heaven.—When we came to the place, I beheld our Saviour with outstretched arms, and was told I must enter in by Christ who was the door.—When I had passed into the glorious city, I

beheld that every thing was clear and pure, and that there was no light of the sun or moon, but Christ was the light thereof. The two angels who had brought me thither, set me upon an elevated seat, and I saw an innumerable company round me, all shining and bright, and they sang the song of Moses and the Lamb.

When this heavenly harmony had ceased there was a great silence, and then the shining host all passed in quietude away, except my two conductors, who came and told me I must not stay there then, but must go back again. When I came to myself, heavenly love covered my mind, and I got up in the morning in much quietness of spirit. My mother took notice of it, and asked me the cause, but I feared to show her the vision, until at length she pressed me so hard to tell her, that I did so, and she replied: "Jacob, my son, this is certainly a foresight of some great work thou wilt have to do; mind now be a good boy and fear God."

Time passed on, and when I was about sixteen years of age, as nearly as I can recollect, I was drawn into solemn silence, and stood alone

in the woods, when a sight and sense came over me of the horrors of war; but at that time I did not know the meaning of it, though there was then a common talk about Whig and Tory. However, when I was about twenty years of age, there was a muster of the militia in our neighborhood, and the clergyman of the Lutheran Church to which I belonged, preached the propriety and necessity of standing in defence of our country against her enemies; so I was persuaded against my better judgment, to join the army; and taking up my musket, I entered the American service.

I saw much of a military life both in the camp and in the field, and encountered many hardships. Were I to enter minutely into a detail of them, it would fill a volume; but in order to make my account as brief as may seem proper, I will notice such events only as impress my mind most forcibly. The company and battalion to which I belonged marched down to Brandywine at Chadsford and joined the army under the command of Washington and Lafayette. We had orders to work day and night to erect batteries,

&c., in order to resist the progress of the English army.

After several days hard labor, we became so drowsy that nearly all the men except the sentinels fell asleep. General Washington stood in the midst of our camp, and called out to us with a loud voice: "Boys, get up—but be silent, the enemy is nearly upon us." About day light the alarm gun was fired by the British; then all our army made ready for battle.

General orders were given for every company to maintain its ranks, aud each man to keep his place. An awful pause preceded the engagement, and some of us stood in solemn silence. I then remembered what I had seen and felt of the mercies of God, and was afresh convinced that it was contrary to the Divine Will for a christian to fight. I was sensible in my own heart that I had done wrong in taking up arms, and the terrors of the Lord fell upon me. I then secretly supplicated the Almighty for preservation, covenanting that if he would be pleased to deliver me from shedding the blood of my fellow-creatures that day, I would never fight again. Then the

love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and all fear of man was entirely taken away; and throughout the engagement I remained perfectly calm, though the bombshells and shot fell round me like hail, cutting down my comrades on every side, and tearing off the limbs of the trees like a whirlwind; the very rocks quaked, and the hills that surrounded us seemed to tremble with the roar of the cannon.

It happened that the standing troops were called into action before the militia of which the brigade that I belonged to was partly composed.—Towards evening, (for the battle lasted from sunrise to sunset,) our battalion was ordered to march forward to the charge. Our way was over the dead and dying, and I saw many bodies crushed to pieces beneath the wagons, and we were bespattered with blood. But no orders were given to use our small arms, and thus I was enabled to rejoice, that though I was provided with sixty cartridges, I did not discharge my musket once that day. Forever magnified be the God of my life that I was mercifully delivered from spilling the blood of any of my fellow-creatures!

As we had to march directly under the English cannon which kept up a continual fire, the destruction of our men was very great, and Washington called out to us: "Men, retreat; it is not worth while to sacrifice so many lives." It was now drawing towards night, and we retreated as well as we could. I took shelter in the woods, and having found a thick grape-vine, crept under it, and worn out with hunger and fatigue, fell sound asleep.

The next morning I crawled out of my hiding place, and a sense of my forlorn condition covered my mind. I knew I had sinned in entering into the war, and no man going to execution could have felt more remorse. I went along until I came to a little cottage where dwelt a Dutch woman. I entered at a venture and begged her to give me a little broth, for I had not tasted a mouthful of food for two days. She took pity on me and gave me some, but I had scarcely done eating it, when a party of Hessians came in and took me prisoner. War-worn and weary as I was, they marched me before them, beating me most unmercifully with the butts of their guns, and occasionally placing their bayonets at my

breast; they swore they would kill me on the spot because I was a rebel. In this trial I experienced heavenly Goodness to be near, and again all fear of death was taken away.

They took me to the Hessian general, Count Donop, who, after much rough language, ordered me to be put under the provost-captain, and with a number of other prisoners of war, I was marched to Philadelphia and lodged in prison.

The number of American prisoners in jail at this time was about nine hundred. During the first five days of our confinement, most of us had nothing to eat, and many died from want.—One poor fellow who had been, as far as I can remember, five days without food, got at last a little piece of dry bread, which he devoured greedily, and then leaning his head back, immediately expired!

I had been three days without a mouthful to eat, when an aunt of mine got leave to see me; she gave me a small quantity of food and then left me, and in a day or two after sent her son with some more, and thus under Providence saved my

life. Ah! when I have seen the tables of Friends in Philadelphia loaded with all the luxuries of wealth, it seemed as if I could weep over them, remembering the days of my famine, and fearing that the day of plenty was not enough valued.

While I was thus suffering under this cruel imprisonment, I remembered the impressions of my mind on the day of the battle at Brandywine, and feeling myself as a poor worm of the dust, I used to go out every evening after dark, into the jail yard, and throw myself prostrate with my face upon the ground in deep abasedness of soul, and supplicate the Lord for mercy.

This sense of my undone condition lasted for a considerable time, until at length the voice of Divine compassion passed through my mind, that my prayers were heard and that I should experience deliverance from my troubles. I arose from the ground with gladness of heart. But now my trials increased, for I being a stout young man, the provost-captain sought to entice me into English service, and for that end offered me a whole handful of English guineas; but I firm-

ly refused, and then they beat me most cruelly, until I was much bruised.

About this time I heard Count Donop say, as he passed by the prison on his way to Red Bank, that he would storm the American fort at that place, even if it were hung at the very gates of heaven. But this presumptuous man received a wound at that battle which proved mortal.

My cousin who visited me in prison told me, if I could get a petition presented to Joseph Galloway (who was the particular friend of the British general Howe) he thought he would sign it. This he did, and I was soon afterwards released.

After various difficulties I succeeded in getting out of Philadelphia, and reached my father's house in safety. My relations and friends were rejoiced to see me, for they had not heard of me after the battle, and had supposed me dead; but my dear mother had maintained a belief that she would see me again, and would often say, "my child is yet alive."

In the spring of 1778 I was married to Dorothy Smith, a young woman with whom I had

been acquainted before I entered the army. We were both poor, but having a true affection, we determined to assist each other in making a livelihood. We removed to Philadelphia and began house-keeping in a small way. I went out to do days' work, and many times have mowed grass on the spot where the Green Street meeting-house now stands. My wife took in washing, and we made out to live.

But it pleased Providence to permit trials to continue, and I had the ague for twelve months. During this afflictive period, I endeavored to support my family by working at my trade of shoemaking, and lest through debility of body I should sleep too long, I used, instead of lying down, to lean my head on my arms against a bench, and catch a little rest in that way.

One day my wife was sick, and my little son said to me, "Father, I am hungry, give me a piece of bread." But, alas! I had none to give him; and as I walked up and down the floor in great trial, a soldier entered, and taking a loaf of bread from his knapsack, asked me if I would give him some potatoes in exchange for it. As soon as

my child saw the bread he renewed his application to me for a piece; but I told him he must wait until I went down cellar and saw whether there were potatoes enough to satisfy the soldier. I was very glad when he had satisfied himself and departed, and then with gratitude to the God of my life, I divided the loaf of bread amongst us.

My circumstances, however, began to mend when I recovered my health.* My wife and I continued to attend the Lutheran church. My

* The following account furnished by William Jeanes as related to him by Jacob Ritter, goes to show more minutely his trials and the state of his outward circumstances about this time:

"I had the fever and ague nearly a year, but when I recovered my bodily strength, I went to a Friend who was a tanner, and making my case known to him, asked for some leather on trust, and told him that I would make it up into shoes and pay him as soon as I could.—He said he did not deal in that way, he must have the money, or I could not have the leather. I went away not knowing what to do, being very much cast down.—As I was walking along the street, I met a Roman Catholic, he stopped and asked me what was the matter, I told him there was matter enough, I had neither money nor bread, and I could not get any work: he told me to

mind had been uneasy for some time, and I went to some of the heads of the society, and queried with them about matters of faith and doctrine, and of the Light that shined within, and also with regard to water baptism.

They told me there was no such thing as an inshining light, and that I was under a temptation of the devil; and recommended me to go into company and amusements to dissipate such thoughts. Here great exercise came upon me. I found I must either unite with them in all their creeds and ceremonies, contrary to the convic-

come with him, and he would let me have a side of sole leather, and a side of upper leather. I went with him and got the leather and made it up into shoes, and took them to market; I made them good and strong and had ready sale for them. I paid the Roman Catholic for the leather, and never wanted money to buy bread afterwards; my business soon increased so that I had several hands in my employ. The Friend met me one day, and asked me why I did not come to him to buy leather. I told him when I had neither money, bread nor credit, he would not trust me, but now I could pay for my leather, and had paid the Roman Catholic many hundred dollars since that time."

tions of my conscience, or must turn my back upon them.

At length I made up my mind to leave them, and remain as a pilgrim upon the earth, not joined to any religious society. I attended to my trade and business diligently; and many persons came to dispute with me on points of doctrine, and tried to influence me to join them. Among the rest there was a company of one sect, who told me they were the only people that walked in the right way; but I told them I was not convinced of it. They asked me what further evidence I wanted. I replied that I had seen with an eye of faith a people who worshipped God in spirit and in truth. They said they were the very people, and began to quote many texts of scripture to prove it. I told them all their talk would signify nothing to me, as I was determined not to join any society, till I was thoroughly convinced in my own mind. So they departed and troubled me no more.

The night after the controversy above alluded to, I saw in my sleep a great multitude of people surrounding a steeple which stood in an open

plain, and I wondered no houses were near it.—Presently, a man clothed in shining garments stepped up to me and said: "Jacob, these people are looking for the appearance of the founder of their society, who will show himself at the belfry of the steeple-house, but mark! as soon as he makes his appearance, the steeple will take fire at its foundation and consume him with every thing that is in the building, and it shall be utterly destroyed."

When he left me, I saw the multitude earnestly gazing up at the man whom I now beheld standing at the belfry dressed in his black gown and white bands. Great fear fell upon me when I saw him, and in a few minutes I beheld the fire kindle, and the whole building with the man in it was totally consumed. I awoke and behold it was a dream! I arose and bowed myself in supplication under the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The heavenly Principle was opened to my understanding, and solemn reverent silence covered my mind.

In this state of feeling I was again permitted to have a near view of Paradise, and to behold a

glorious company surrounding the throne of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and a voice was heard saying, "there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." This blissful view confirmed the vision I had when I was a lad as has been related heretofore. Oh! that all would come to know this pure inward silence before God! On opening the Bible while under these serious considerations, it seemed as if I had a spiritual understanding given me, such as I never had before, though I had read the scriptures a great deal.

Soon after this, an impression was made on my mind that I must go to the Bank meeting, but did not know at that time any thing of such a place, nor was I acquainted with any of the Society of Friends. Accordingly, I went out and inquired of some person in the street for such a place as the Bank meeting-house;* it was on a week day. I at length arrived at the place; and opening the door, found a number of people assembled and sitting in solemn stillness. I went in, and seated myself behind the door. In

* Formerly situated in Front, above Mulberry street.

a few minutes I found something working so powerfully on my mind, that it was comparable to the whirlwind, the fire, and the earthquake: under this exercise I got up and went out of the meeting, and stood at the corner of the house, outside; but I felt condemned in my heart and very sorrowful for disturbing the solemnity of the meeting; for now my eyes were opened, and a sense was given me, that these were the people I had seen with an eye of faith, worshipping God in the silence of all flesh. I then resolved to go in again, and sit down in company with Friends. I did so, and the same commotion took hold of my mind again; but as I endured it and strove for stillness, light arose on my poor soul, and it seemed as if a window had been opened in a dark room, and let in the bright sunshine.

Here all my doubts were at an end, and I was confirmed in my faith, not by outward observation nor by outward things, but by the everlasting principle of Truth revealed in me, that this was the true worship in spirit and in truth.—Sweet peace covered my spirit, and I felt as if I could have sat there till night. However, the meeting broke up and I went home determined

to let none of my acquaintance know that I attended the Quaker meeting. But the second time I went the news spread, and the Lutherans heard of it. Now my trials began afresh.—When my wife heard of my having been to Quaker meeting, she told me she hoped I would not forsake the Lutheran faith, nor deny the scriptures; as it was commonly reported that Friends did deny them. She continued to go to the Lutheran church, and I to the Bank meeting, for about two years.

It was a close trial for me to differ from my dear wife in matters of religion, but I was favored to keep pretty much in patience, and said but little to her on points of controversy, which proved of use.

Not long after I joined with Friends, hearing of a fair to be held in Warwick in Maryland, and also one at Charleston, I concluded to take a parcel of shoes I had made to the fair.

Accordingly, I set out with a journeyman and went down the river in a vessel about seventy miles, then crossed the country to the head of the

bay. When we reached Charleston I hired a room and bought half a cord of wood, that we might live quietly and peaceably by ourselves while we remained in the place. A large concourse of people gathered in the town, and among the rest was a play-actor. He came to me and offered to show me all his art for nothing; but I told him I did not want to see it.

I was also asked to attend a Methodist meeting, which I declined and remained quietly in my room. One evening a company of rude men came in and drank and used much bad language. I bore with it for some time, but at length told them, that as I paid the rent of the room, I wished to have it for myself and companions. Some of them being warmed with liquor, got angry and threatened to abuse me because I would not join with them.

An Irishman who was acquainted with me, stood up and told these abusive men, that if any one insulted me, he was ready to defend me through rough and smooth; but I told him to forbear and not strike one of them, for they had drank so much they did not understand rightly what they were

about — so he sat down peaceably. Now just about this time, a stranger somewhat fashionable came into the room—his countenance and deportment were grave and solid. I perceived by his language and appearance that he was not a member of Friends' society. He spoke out and said, "my friends, I have something on my mind to say, if you are willing to hear, but if you are not, I will try to keep it to myself." As soon as he spoke my spirit bore witness to his and I called out, "my friend, if thou hast anything on thy mind to say, be faithful;" so he stepped forward and spoke as follows:—

"My friends, I was once as fond of liquor as any of you, and drank a great deal not only in company but by myself at home. But after a day of carousing I began to reflect that if I kept on that way, it would lead me to misery. I went to bed, and thought I was conducted to the top of a mountain, where I beheld two men entirely destitute of covering standing by a trough in which I saw some red stuff that looked like fire. One of the men had a scoop-shovel in his hand, and would frequently lade up a shovelful of the fire and throw it into the open mouth of the other,

who, after swallowing it, would vomit it back into the trough, and this was done again and again! I was much astonished at this sight, and asked my guide what it meant; he replied, 'this is the miserable state of drunkards.' Oh! said I, this then is my state for I love liquor. I awoke in great terror, and trembling made a solemn covenant, that I would not taste another drop of liquor as long as I lived, and from that time I have been entirely clear from that awful sin." The company listened with profound attention to the voice of this stranger; and I do not think any more liquor was drank that night, for the people went away next morning all sober.

Thus I was delivered from my trials at that time, yet felt impressed with the belief that more awaited me. So when I embarked in the vessel that was to bring me back to Philadelphia, I found some rough men on board who persisted in proceeding on the voyage, though the captain said he thought we should have a storm. They went below deck to play cards, and drank and swore all day. I went to them, and warned them to leave off their evil doings, but they treated me with scorn, and would not take my advice.

However, a gale overtook us in the evening, the wind blew, the waves beat, the thunder roared and the lightning flashed: then these wicked men were seized with great terror, and on their knees prayed for mercy. I sat in a solemn frame of mind, and said to them, "My friends, you have been serving the Devil all day, and now in your extremity you cry unto that God you have blasphemed." They were struck with conviction, and implored me to forgive them for their ill treatment of me in the morning. "My friends," said I, "I freely forgive you, and believe if you will now turn from your evil ways, that the Lord will forgive you, and you will experience his mercy and preservation." And when we came safe to land they hung round me like poor beggars, and we parted in much tenderness.*

* Jacob Ritter was a faithful coadjutor with his brethren of the Society of Friends in the support of their testimony against intemperance. He labored earnestly to dissuade all who were in the habit of drinking intoxicating liquors from such a hurtful and dangerous practice.

He frequently expressed his fervent concern on this subject both in meetings and out of them; remarking that he had been grieved in the army on seeing the officers mix gunpowder in liquor, and press the soldiers to drink it

One day on my return from another part of the town where I had some business, I found my mother-in-law and another woman at my house, disputing with my wife about doctrine. Her mother had charged her with going to Quaker meeting, which she denied, and on my coming in, appealed to me. "No," said I, "thou hast never been." My wife stepped up to me, and said in a very loving manner, "now Jacob I am convinced thou art in the right way, and I will henceforth go to meeting with thee."

When she had so said, her mother started up in a passion, and when I tried to persuade her to stay and dine with us, she refused declaring she would have nothing to do with such reprobates.

When the yellow fever broke out in Philadelphia in the year 1793, my mind was secretly drawn to visit those who had the disease; but a

before going into battle, that their minds might be the more infuriated: and thus men were hurried into eternity in this state. He very justly observed that intoxicating liquors inflamed the worst passions of men, and led them on to the commission of crimes, which in moments of sober reflection they would abhor.

great conflict between my fears as a man, and my duties as a Christian arose, till at length I determined to put my trust in God, and venture my life in the cause of suffering humanity. As I was going out of the house, my wife said to me, "Now don't thee go among the fever." I made her no reply, but walked down to the residence of a friend who lay ill with the fever. When I got to his door, nature prevailed, and I passed by; but before I had gone many steps, great distress fell upon me for my disobedience, and I then gave up to do whatever the Lord required of me. So I returned to the house and entered the sick man's chamber. I found him in the greatest extremity, but the power of the Almighty overshadowed me, and I had faith to believe he would be raised, which he afterwards was, and is living at this day. When I had performed the services I had been sent to do, I left him and returned to my home in great peace.

My wife immediately perceived the smell of the yellow fever was upon me, and taxed me with having been among it. I did not attempt to deny it, but told her I had done so in obedience to Divine command: "well then," said she, "I

submit;" and from that time I visited all the sick I could, both Friends and others, rich and poor, and administered such consolation and assistance as the good Master put in my heart.—Many of the Lutherans who looked shy at me after I had left their Society, now they were brought into affliction, received me gladly; and my confidence was strong in the Lord. At one place, I found the husband lying very ill and his young wife standing beside him. He stretched out his hand towards me, and said he was glad to see me, that he was aware his end was near, but that he should die in peace with God and all men. I spoke what was on my mind to him, when, taking my hand, he said, "Jacob, farewell! we shall never more see each other until we meet in Heaven, but be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive a crown of life." I left him, and the next morning called again to inquire about him. His poor wife, with two little children, when she saw me, put her hands on her head, and bowing herself in anguish of spirit, cried out, "My husband is gone forever, thou sawest him last night, and now he is under the ground."

My heart was moved at her distress, and I felt more than I could well bear. I might relate many more affecting circumstances which I saw during this awful visitation, but in order to be brief, I let them pass. But one event now occurs to my recollection which perhaps I had better mention.

As I was going along the street one day, I saw a corpse brought to the Friends' burying ground, and only one Friend* following it. I joined him and we proceeded to the grave. He stood on one side of it, and I on the other, while the corpse was buried. We parted at the gate of the grave-yard, and each went to his own home, and we were both taken ill with the fever.

While I lay sick, expecting nothing but death, a man came to my bed-side and told me the Friend above alluded to was dead and buried. When I heard this, great weight fell upon me, and I thought I must die too; but suddenly my mind was raised, and I was again favored to have a transporting view of the heavenly land. I be-

* Daniel Offley, an eminent minister, for an account of whom, see Friends' Miscellany.—Ed.

held the garden of Eden, and saw many persons dressed in glorious habits, walking to and fro among the trees which were loaded with fruits and flowers; numerous birds were singing among the branches, and all was peace and happiness. As I stood by the gate, much wishing that I might dwell in the garden also, I saw the Friend above alluded to walking among those glorious inhabitants: he advanced towards me and I perceived he looked very fresh and fair.—He said to me, "Jacob, the people say I am dead, but thou seest me here alive and perfectly happy." Then a delicious odour and pure air came from the garden and passed quite through me, and I heard a voice say to me, "Thou shalt not die at this time, thy work is not yet done." My ears were then filled with the same delightful harmony that I had before a sense of, and the praises of the Lord were sounded throughout that happy land. When I came to myself, I found my wife leaning over me to ascertain whether I breathed. I soon revived, and began to recover from that time.

My dear wife continued to accompany me to meetings for some time, and was concerned to speak a few words in them, and in the last one

she attended, she mentioned in German the parable of the prodigal. About this time she told me she thought she should leave me before long; that she saw her end was approaching; that she believed her peace was made with her Creator, and soon afterwards she was taken ill. A little while before she died, she called me and the children to her, and after tenderly commending them to my care, she foretold their future history, which I have lived to see fully verified in every particular except one; then taking me by the hand, told me, she had seen in the clearness of the light of truth that many trials awaited me: "but be thou faithful unto death and thou shalt receive the crown of life, which is laid up in store for thee, and for all them that love the appearance of Jesus Christ." She then bid the children one by one and myself, an affectionate farewell. "Now," said she, "I go," and immediately leaned her head back on her pillow, and died.

While a widower, I went regularly to Friends' meetings, and many were my trials and exercises, both inwardly and outwardly. It would often occur to my mind as I sat in meeting, that when I was a prisoner in the revolutionary war,

I had vowed revenge upon those Englishmen and Hessians, who had so cruelly beaten and abused me, and I would secretly petition my Heavenly Father to enable me to forgive them, and to point out some way to overcome those feelings.

One night it appeared to me that I stood in my rank in the army, with my gun on my shoulder and when I remembered that I belonged to Friends' Society whose principle was peace to all mankind, I thought how inconsistent it was for me still to wear regimentals, and carry my weapons of war. I then looked round to see how I could get clear, and there seemed to be no other way, than to throw down my arms, and desert; this I accordingly did, and as I ran an officer called out, "there is a man deserting, but let him alone, a faithful sentinel is on his way, who will stop him and bring him up, and then we will pay him soundly."

I heard these words, but dared not turn out of my way to the right or left to escape the threatened danger. So when I came to the sentry-box, a soldier in a red coat leveled his musket at me, and bid me stop, for he must bring me back

to the army. I heeded him not, but, making a sudden spring forward, passed him, and he fired upon me; I felt the bullet strike my back, but was not wounded. So I ran on until I was too tired to run any further, and, laying myself under an oak tree, fell asleep.

When I awoke, methought I found myself in great darkness, and was at a loss to know what to do, when suddenly I saw a great light before me, and was commanded to arise and follow that light. I did so, and it led me safely; for I observed that wherever my road was rough and difficult, the blessed light drew near, and distinctly showed me how to step; and when the path was good, it removed to a greater distance before me. Thus travelling forward I was led down hill in order to pass over a frightful desert: the light now hovered about my head, and shed such a brightness on my path that I could distinctly see numberless reptiles, and noxious vermin about my feet, but they fled from the light and hid themselves, and I stepped from one sod to another unhurt, and thus got safely over this dismal place.

My guiding light now began to ascend a hill

and I followed it; but I was now so wearied with my long travels, that I was obliged to climb up the mountain on my hands and feet.

When the vision was gone I came to myself, and was sensible that the Christian principle in my own breast had entirely overcome that spirit of war and revenge, which had so long troubled me, even in meetings; and I was enabled to forgive my enemies, even those who had so greatly abused me while I was a prisoner wholly in their power, and unable to defend myself. Yes! and I forgave them from my very heart, loved them freely, and could have received them as brothers. Oh! the power of this redeeming principle in the soul of man.

In the spring of 1794, I removed with my motherless children to Springfield where I had bought a small farm, hoping my trials and temptations would be less in the country than in the city; but when settled on my farm, I found the tempter was the same in every place. I attended Richland meeting, having to walk five miles to get there.

Oftentimes a concern rested on my mind, to

open my mouth in meeting, to declare the dealings of the Lord to his poor servant, though in a few wordsand in a broken manner; and as I stood faithful to the pure principle in my own breast, I was favored to experience peace, and had also the unity and sympathy of Friends.

When Friends first proposed recommending me as a minister to the Quarterly meeting of Ministers and Elders, I begged of them not to do so, for I felt myself a poor, dumb man, unfit for the service. So it was put off nearly a year, and I continued in my low and humble appearances as before. Then the matter was proposed to me again: I told them I had rather not, but at length submitted to the judgment of my friends; and when they insisted on my taking a seat in the upper gallery, I did it with great reluctance, my mind being covered with fear and solemnity whenever I sat down therein.

I mention this little circumstance not to boast of my humility, but because I believe the cause of Truth has at times suffered loss by its professors being too forward.

In the year 1802, I married Ann Williams of

Buckingham, and soon afterwards we concluded to remove into a neighbourhood more thickly settled by Friends, and accordingly I sold my farm at Richland and bought one at Plymouth, to which latter place I removed with my family in the spring of 1812. From that time to the present year (1827) I have dwelt pretty much in quiet, receiving all who came to my house; turning none away; until now, divisions and rents have arisen among Friends, and many of my fellow-professors have turned their backs upon the galleries, because of disputes about faith and doctrine. Now I am clear in the belief that had we all attended faithfully to the pure principle of light and life in our hearts and minds, these disputes and divisions would not have been among us, and I am convinced, that we never shall get back to the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace until we settle down in the everlasting silence, to the saving and redeeming principle in our own hearts; and blessed is he who attends strictly to its divine instructions and reproofs, which are the way of life and salvation.

Here the journal of Jacob Ritter, as left by himself, closes. The last twenty-eight years of

his life he resided at Plymouth, a branch of Gwynedd Monthly meeting, in Montgomery co. Pennsylvania. Some of us being intimately acquainted with him, and frequently in his company, have heard him relate many interesting occurrences that are not mentioned in his Journal; and it was thought best to annex these to the foregoing account.

In his ministry, Jacob Ritter seldom mentioned the sacred name, and when he did, it was with awe and reverence. He abounded in original ideas, and illustrated the subject before him from familiar objects of creation. His disposition was meek and unassuming. In humility and self-denial, he was exemplary: and after passing through many trials, he became so much redeemed from the world, and the spirit of human policy, that it is believed he never exercised the right of suffrage so far as to attend an election.

It is not recollected that he ever appeared in public vocal supplication, but in his appearances in the ministry, he frequently adverted to the duty and advantages of silent inward prayer.

In his person he was neat and clean, his dress was generally of a light color; his conversation was cheerful and mixed with gravity. In company he frequently related anecdotes with which his memory was abundantly stored, and they seldom failed to attract attention, while they were fraught with interest and instruction, especially to young people.

His wife died about three years and nine months before him, by which he sustained an irreparable loss. She was a true help-mate to him; a valuable elder of our Monthly meeting during most of the time she resided among us, and frequently travelled with him. A short time before her decease, he paid a visit to a number of Friends at Gwynedd, and in one of the families he said: "When I was young, I had a wife and I loved her, but I hardly knew her worth; and now I am old, my wife feels more precious to me every hour."

A few days before her decease, he dreamed he saw his staff, (a favourite cane he had cut in the woods, and had used nearly forty years,) lying broken on the floor; this dream troubled him; when he awoke he found his wife, who had risen

early, returning to bed with a chill and a pain in her bones that she said "struck at her life:" he immediately thought of his broken staff, but did not mention it to her. She died in a few days, and the dream was affectingly realized in the loss of his wife, who had been a staff, a faithful and an affectionate companion to him for nearly forty years. She died on the seventeenth of the third-month, 1838.

In a Friend's family not long before his decease, he related some circumstances that took place on the battle-ground at Chadsford when he was in the army. He said he had been very recently on the ground, and saw the hills, the rocks and the trees that brought back the remembrance of the awful scene he witnessed, when the desolations of war were around him, when the shrieks of the wounded and the groans of the dying were ringing in his ears. He shed tears at the recital of this melancholy picture of human carnage.

In conversation he frequently related the events of that day, with expressions of gratitude to the Father of mercies, who then clearly showed to him the sinfulness of all wars and fightings,

who took away all fear of man from him; who plucked him as a brand from the burning; and led him safely along through deep suffering.

After the death of his wife he was very lonely, but continued for the rest of his days diligent in attending meetings both for worship and discipline, and occasionally visited his friends and neighbors, imparting counsel and encouragement to them as the way opened.

A few months before his decease, he visited his brothers at Springfield, and many of his former neighbors and friends with whom he had religious opportunities. On his return home, he tarried several days at Richland, visiting Friends and others. He attended meeting there, in which he delivered the following communication:

"Since I have been sitting amongst you this morning, dear friends, I have remembered something that I don't know I have thought of for seventy years. When I was a little boy about ten years old, I used to like to go to meetings sometimes. One first-day morning, I asked my father if I might not go with some of my com-

rades, neighbouring boys, to Quaker meeting. He said, "for what would you go to their meeting?—they don't have any preaching, they just sit still."

But still I wished to go; "well," said he, "go; but mind and behave yourself." So I set off, and walked about five miles barefooted: when I came to the meeting, it was late; all the people were in. I went in, and sat down behind the door. I looked round; the people appeared so serious and solemn, that it brought good feelings to my mind, though there was no preaching. Oh! the good feelings I experienced! so that when meeting broke up, I felt as if I could sit still an hour longer.

If the children,—the dear children, would but be still and try to wait on the Lord in the truth, he would in mercy draw near to them; for he loves little children, and sometimes graciously visits them, I believe, at a very early age. When I came home, my father said, "well, did the Quakers preach?" I said, "no, but there are good feelings amongst them that are better than preach-

ing; *we* have no such good feelings in *our* meetings."

From the period above mentioned until his entrance into the army, it is not recollected that he related much in the order of time, that is not contained in his journal. In this school of adversity, his mind became stored with a number of anecdotes, some of which he related in meetings and others by the fire-side, with considerable force and interest.

On one occasion, he said, a young man was brought into the army and required to perform military duty; he said, he could not fight, for he was a Quaker. The presiding officer replied, "But you are no Quaker for you have not the 'cooterments,'" (accoutrements). The young man then produced some written credentials by which he proved his right of membership. The officer now called for a shears that he might trim him; and so he cut off his capes and his lappels, and *sitch a hair tail he had behind*, (a cue) and then said to him, "now you may go, now you look more like a Quaker."

Jacob related this anecdote in a Monthly meeting when the subject of "plainness, &c.," was under review, and went on to show that in the army it was considered an act of gross misbehaviour and insubordination, for a man to wear any other uniform than that which accorded with his rank, and the company to which he belonged; that the young man would have been saved a great deal of chagrin, had his "cooterments" corresponded with his profession; that the officer could not understand why he appeared in a dress having in many respects the semblance of a military garb, professing at the same time the peaceable principles of Friends.

He drew a very sensible conclusion from this anecdote, viz.—that "plainness of speech and simplicity of apparel" were a much greater protection to Friends than many were aware of; that the most correct and honorable people of the world could not view a Friend, swerving from the principles of his profession, in any other light than that in which the officer regarded the individual above mentioned.

Jacob Ritter was a bright example to his

friends and neighbors in the faithful support of our testimony to plainness in dress, furniture, and equipage, and he agreed with many others, that plainness in these respects consisted in "the greatest degree of usefulness, comfort, and convenience, obtained with the least degree of labor and expense."

About the middle of the ninth-month, 1777, he was taken prisoner as before related. The weather was cold, the glass in the jail windows was broken out, and he was compelled to lodge on the bare ground, almost literally without food and clothing. Many of his fellow-prisoners actually starved to death, and some of them died with a little grass half chewed in their mouths.*

* This affecting circumstance is forcibly alluded to in a letter published in 1778, and addressed by Francis Hopkinson, one of the signers of the declaration of American Independence, to Joseph Galloway. In this letter, which contains a severe rebuke of the conduct of the latter individual, the writer thus expresses himself: "you sit down daily to a board spread with more than plenty, and know with unconcern that numbers of your countrymen, even some of your former acquaintances are suf-

He was applied to by one poor prisoner, who said his end was near, if he could not get some relief. Having with great difficulty procured a cracker, Jacob told him to take a little at a time well soaked in water; this was done, and the man revived, and several years afterwards, as Jacob was passing, this person came out of his house and addressed him in this manner: "you are the man that saved my life in prison with a cracker! come in, for I owe my life to you, I will make you all the compensation in my power."

Jacob said, "I looked at him, and remembered him, but I could not take any reward; and after we had talked a while about our sufferings in prison, and about our release, and how we fared, we both burst into a flood of tears, and parted in great tenderness."

But to return, he said, "one day a family in Philadelphia, knowing of our sufferings, sent us

fering all the lingering anguish of absolute famine in the jails of this city." "You well know that they have plucked the weeds of the earth for food, and expired with the unchewed grass in their mouths, &c."

a large tub filled with warm soup ; and the keeper of the prison, who was a very hard-hearted man, instead of dividing it among us, poured it on the ground in the jail yard, and laughed when he saw the prisoners fall down and lick up the soup like dogs." "One day I saw a plain looking Friend step up to the prison door with a paper in his hand, and ask the turnkey, 'is Jacob Ritter in prison'? 'There are nine hundred men here, was the answer, I don't know Jacob Ritter.' I then stepped up, and said, 'I am Jacob Ritter;' he said to me, 'well, Jacob ! what wouldst thou say, if I should set thee at liberty?' I said, 'Oh ! Oh ! I would be very glad.' He then handed the paper to the turnkey, who, looking at it, unlocked the iron gate, and said to me, 'there, now begone about your business.' I felt new life spring in me, I jumped off the steps, and went to one of my relations in town ; but don't know to this day, the name of the Friend who was instrumental in my release ; he seemed like an angel that had come to let me out.*

* It is probable that Galloway and General Howe allowed some Friend to transact the business for them after Galloway had signed the petition, as mentioned in these Memoirs, page 19.

My relations were very kind to me and gave me food and clothing until my strength returned. And after I had done what I could in the way of bodily labor to reward them for their kindness, I went home to Springfield, where they were all very glad to see me, for they thought I was dead, but my mother kept the faith and would say, "I shall see my child again."

Soon after his removal to Philadelphia, he was under great exercise of mind concerning his religious duty, and inwardly concerned in prayer, that he might be rightly directed.

He said, "while under this exercise of mind I had a dream or vision, in which I saw at some distance before me a temple, or strong tower standing in the light; while I was looking and wondering what it was, there was one who told me "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous flee thereunto and are safe." So I got a ladder and tried to get in at the upper story, but I found no entering place there. I moved the ladder and tried to get in at the next story below, but found I could not. I tried again at the next story, but still could not get in.

I then tried on a level with the ground, and walked all round the tower but could find no entering place; I now began to feel great uneasiness, fearing I was unworthy and could not get in at all.

"While I was musing, it sprang up clear in my mind, that the way to get in, was to go down into the basement story, so I went down and found the way without difficulty, and when inside I found there was a way to get up."*

* In relating this and other instances of a similiar kind, he would say: "It was a dream or a vision, but I believe it was a vision." I prefer the latter name, because vision is a more definite term than dream, and literally means a sight or perception, whether ocular or mental. If the object of perception addresses itself to the outward senses, we see it with the outward eye, and obtain what is called ocular demonstration. If it addresses itself to the understanding, we examine it by the mental eye, or the eye of reason, and thus we may arrive at certainty in this, no less than in the former case. If the object of perception be supernatural, or such as our natural powers of mind alone cannot comprehend, we require a superadded means of vision. For "what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God." No man could ever have known anything more

"Soon after this I had many trials: the officers of the church were roused up against me, and the members were full of arguments. One day as I was passing through the market, I met one of them, who was full of zeal; he got very warm, and was angry because I went to the Quakers. I thought he would have struck me in the face, and this made me also feel a little warm, but I happened to look down and saw my

than the things of man were it not that a measure of the Divine spirit "is given to every man to profit withal." By this spirit we have a clear vision or perception concerning Divine things and it reveals or makes known unto us our duty to God and our fellow-man. But dreams are generally the reverse of all this, being for the most part of a vague and indeterminate character, without clearness or certainty; and yet none, perhaps, will call in question George Fox's definition of dreams. He says in substance that they are of three kinds, viz: "The revelations of the Divine Spirit to man in sleep; the workings of the imagination when the mind is overcharged with temporal business, and the temptations or whisperings of Satan." But it is evident that a divine discernment or a supernatural power of vision is requisite to enable us to make a proper distinction with respect to those several kinds of dreams, and the true followers of Christ will doubtless be furnished with this necessary gift, or qualification. "Blessed are your eyes for they see (or have sound vision) and your ears for they hear." Mat. xiii 16. Ed.

own fist was shut, so I passed away as soon as I could, and this was a lesson for me to take care and not get into disputes about religion."

"One day when I came home from Friends' meeting, I found some of the church Elders at my house; they said they came to beat me out of the silly notion of going to Quaker meeting: they were full of talk and used many arguments to prove that I had better keep to the faith in which I had been educated; that I would be greatly deceived if I went to the Quakers.

I said but little as I had no life in disputing, so after dinner, I went away to lie down, leaving them to talk with my wife. I felt very much tried because my wife was troubled, and did not like me to go to Friends' meeting, though I had been there but a few times. So I found it would be best to say but little, and try to be still, and had faith to believe that a way would be opened for me in the clearness.

I soon fell into a sound sleep, and just as I was waking up, I thought I saw a grave looking Friend come to my bedside and call aloud to me, saying, 'arise Jacob and go to meeting,' it is

quite time, and be not faithless but believing." I jumped up quickly, and heard the clock strike four. It was on a first-day afternoon, and the meeting was generally gathered: so I stepped into the room, and found the church officers still talking with my wife; but now they began to talk to me, and when they saw me take down my hat which was hanging on a peg, they talked very loud. I said nothing at all, but left them and walked off to meeting as fast as I could, and oh! what a precious meeting it was. I felt the reward of sweet peace for obedience.

"When the elders of the church found I was fixed in my mind to go to Friends' meetings, they gave me up, and after a while disowned me. About this time, William Savery took notice of me; he would come and sit by me, when I was at work, and was a strength to me; I told him I now felt peace, and believed I was safe. He said, 'Oh! Jacob, thy work is only pretty well begun yet, but keep in good heart, keep the faith.'

"At length I felt it my duty to apply to be received into membership with Friends: this was a great trial to me, I tried to think it would

be enough to keep steady to meetings, and live an orderly life, but I could not feel easy,—so I took up the cross and applied, and Friends sent a committee to visit me."

"They came a great many times to see me, but did not say much, passing most of the time of their visits in silence; my case was in the meeting about two years, so that I was fearful I was not worthy to be a member. I told William Savery one day, 'I thought Friends were very slow;' he said, 'never mind, Jacob, all is right enough, keep the patience, thou art just as well off as if thou wast a member.'

"When Friends informed me I was a member, and invited me to meetings for discipline, I thought, surely my work was done, that I had now got into the tower I saw in my vision. I attended meetings diligently, and felt great inward peace."

"One day, while sitting in a meeting of worship, I felt a few words spring up in my mind to speak; but I let in the reasoner, and pleaded within myself that I was very ignorant, and

was imperfect in the English language. So I put it by, but oh ! the darkness and horror that took hold of my mind; I felt the terrors of the Lord for disobedience, and was fearful I was now forsaken, and should no more feel the reward of obedience: I cried inwardly to the Lord, that if he would not forsake me, I would be more faithful in time to come. So one day while sitting on the back seat in the Bank meeting, my good Master came to me again, and gave me a few words to speak. I felt very fearful—nature began to shrink, and my heart seemed to come up in my mouth, and I trembled; but after a while, I stood up and said a word or two, and the people began to look *back*, *back*, all over the house at me, to see where the words came from, and it frightened me so that I poured it on them in Dutch."

"When the meeting was over, I went away as soon as I could, and kept out of sight for a while as much as possible, but one day I saw two young men getting into a gig, who laughed out loud, and said, "there goes the man that preached to us in Dutch;"—so I felt discouraged, but William Savery came to see me, and said,

'Jacob, thou preaches to us in Dutch, cans't thou not preach in English, we can't understand Dutch:' I said 'my English is very imperfect,' he said, 'but thou can try Jacob, I want thee next time to try and preach in English as well as thou can.' 'So the next time *I sphoke so well as I coot, part Tutch and part English.*' Oh! what comfort I felt; Friends were very kind to me; they did not tell me not to speak at all, which I expected, but told me to do as well as I could, and I received great encouragement from time to time from William Savery."

It appears from his Journal that in the spring of 1794, he removed with his motherless children to Springfield, (the place of his nativity,) hoping his trials would be less in a retired part of the country than in the large city of Philadelphia, where his children were much exposed to many temptations; though, as he frequently said, he was well aware that his prospects and profits in business at this time, would be likely to suffer loss by his removal.

He added further, "my trials were many both outwardly and in a spiritual sense; several good

horses that I had died one after another, besides many other losses I met with, so that I had a great deal to do with the wheelbarrow and the grubbing hoe. I had also to walk five miles to meeting.

I was for several years much discouraged, but as I kept humble and low, trusting to the care of my Divine master, I was preserved from murmuring. So, after some years, my circumstances began to mend, and I believed in the truth of the Apostle's testimony, that "bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."*

The following occurrence may perhaps be inserted in this place.

During the sittings of one of our Yearly Meetings, he attended at one of the houses opened for public worship on fifth-day—the house was crowded. The time of the meeting was occupied by two Friends in the ministry who indulged in tiresome repetitions, evidently to the disadvantage and unsettlement of the meeting. Jacob was very much tried. After meeting, on going to a Friend's house, he found a large com-

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

pany, and the two preachers above alluded to. The latter had heard of Jacob Ritter and were desirous to see him, and to be informed of some of the singular events of his life from his own lips. After dinner, the company being collected, he related some anecdotes that attracted great attention, and, keeping to his exercise about the meeting in the morning, proceeded as follows:

"After I had passed through many exercises and deep provings in the army, way was made for me gradually, until I became a member of the Society of Friends; then I thought I had got to the root, and foundation, and spring of life, but I found I wanted experimental knowledge; so I had to pass through the furnace again, and I had many trials and deep provings. My wife died, and I went with my little motherless children into the conntry and began farming, where I endured many hardships.

I cleared a piece of new land, and found a great deal of rubbish on it. I cut down the trees and hauled them off, but had to leave the stumps and the long roots in the ground. I had a great deal to do with my grubbing hoe to dig up the

bushes and the underwood, and ploughed my land as well as I could.

I have thought sometimes a farmer may learn a great deal in a spiritual sense, for our hearts must be cleared of a great deal of rubbish before they are fit to receive the good seed of the kingdom. Now after I had ploughed and harrowed my land, I sowed it with good seed, and it soon sprung up: bnt my work was not yet done, for I had to watch it, and fence it in. My land produced well, and I felt thankful.

As I could see several days before harvest when my grain would be ripe, I went out and engaged my reapers; I fixed the day when they should come and reap down my harvest; so we reaped it and bound it up, and shocked it, and I had a good crop, and after it had stood a while in the shock to season, we hauled it to the barn and put it away; we gleaned it with the rake, and hauled in the gleanings, and threshed them out: *Now if I had told my reapers to go and reap my field again, they would have thought I was crazy.*"*

* The lesson inculcated in this instance is similar to the pithy advice given by a distinguished person, the

The hint appeared to be well understood; all could comprehend that there was a reference to the occurrences of the morning; the force of the application was the more sensibly felt from the fact that it was kept in reserve for the last words while the story was related in free and pleasant conversation, and all were waiting attentively to learn what he would make of his farming anecdote.

Jacob Ritter seldom travelled long journeys in the work of the ministry, but whenever it was required he cheerfully gave up his time to the service of Truth. He was a diligent attender of meetings both for worship and discipline, and, while industrious in his outward calling, his pri-

late John Witherspoon, when principal of Princeton College, to several students who had completed their education, and were about to receive his farewell address on their leaving school to enter upon the duties of their several professions. He said to them, "Boys, I foresee that some of you will become distinguished in the pulpit and others at the bar. In relation to public speaking, I have one charge to give you which I hope you will always carefully observe, that is, before you speak, be sure you have something to say, and always mind to stop when you are done."

mary concern was to seek first the "kingdom of God and his righteousness."

While he resided at Springfield, he accompanied James Simpson on a religious visit. On their return home, James appointed a meeting at Easton: they put up at a public house, and Jacob undertook to make arrangements for the meeting; for this purpose the court house was obtained, though not without some opposition from one influential individual.

James, who was probably aware that there had been some difficulty about the meeting, and seeing the people assemble in crowds, became very much depressed; he sat for a while in the chimney corner, questioning the rectitude of his proceeding in appointing the meeting: in this state of feeling, he ordered his horse to be put to the carriage, and, like the prophet Jonah, was going to flee from the word of the Lord.

At this critical juncture, Jacob arrived and inquired of the ostler, 'what does this mean?' The reply was,—"the gentleman ordered his horse," "well, I order him back again," said Jacob. The

horse was put away, and when Jacob walked in, he found James, who was under a great weight of exercise, preparing to go; he was very glad to see Jacob, and wished him to take charge of the meeting.

Jacob said, "that wont do, James, but thou must go to the meeting thou hast appointed, and I will go with thee." James said "thou must do the preaching then, for I cannot." Jacob replied, "never mind about the preaching, nobody has asked thee to preach, but let us go to meeting, that is the first thing to be done."

James went in great fear and trembling, and Jacob felt brotherly sympathy with him; for some time, James sat with his head bowed almost to his knees; but at length light sprang up, and he was enabled to proclaim the truth in the demonstration of the spirit and with great power, and the meeting concluded under a solemn covering.

The individual who had thrown difficulty in the way of appointing the meeting, was now so changed in his feelings that he gave the

Friends a pressing invitation to dine with him; but Jacob said, "no, thee throwed cold water on this concern in the beginning, and now we must go to the public house for our dinner."

After dinner they passed quietly away, "rejoicing for the consolation"* which they felt for this little act of dedication, and when they had ascended an eminence out of sight of the people but within full view of the town, James stopped his carriage, and, looking back, exclaimed, "Oh! Easton, Easton, thou hast had a broad-side to-day." Jacob replied, "Ah! thou can brag now, but remember how it was a while ago in that chimney corner."

In the spring of 1812, he removed with his family to Plymouth; he had been in search of a place for a considerable length of time, seeking after the mind of truth in so important a step as a change of residence. He at length agreed with Thomas Corson, and purchased his farm, about a mile and a half from Plymouth meeting house.

* Acts 15. 31.

Thomas removed to Whiteland in Chester county, and soon after he and his wife joined with Friends and became valuable members of our Society. From remarks made by Thomas Corson, it is believed that his intercourse with Jacob Ritter on this occasion, and the strong impression which he received of the sterling integrity and uprightness of the latter, were means of awakening convictions in his mind, and of inducing him to look towards being united in church fellowship with Friends.

During the time of his residence at Plymouth, Jacob Ritter attended an appointed meeting on a first-day afternoon in a neighbourhood of Germans in Toamensing, about fourteen miles from his home; here a large number of aged people, mostly Germans, attended, many of whom understood but little English.

After a time of silence, he stood up and recited in Dutch a few words from the scriptures.—Here, as in the case of Paul when he spoke in the Hebrew language, the people kept the more silence. He spoke for a long time fluently, and pathetically; some who understood him said it

was the most eloquent and impressive discourse they had ever heard. He was evidently not under any difficulty and embarrassment for words, as was frequently the case when he spoke in English. His communication, a portion of which had reference to his sufferings in the army and from which he took occasion to describe the horrors of war, drew tears copiously from many eyes apparently unaccustomed to shed them. After the meeting had concluded, the old Germans, men and women, gathered round him and conversed with him freely and affectionately in their mother tongue.

On a certain occasion, a very zealous professor of religion remarked to Jacob "that the world of mankind had lapsed into a state of great degeneracy, that many thousands were hurled into the vortex of eternal ruin; that the Lord had a harvest, and the harvest was great, but the laborers were few The few, he said, were too idle; it was high time they should be up, and a doing, up and a *doing*, *doing*, *doing*! that he saw clearly the blood of the ruined would be upon the heads of the idle laborers."

"Ah!" said Jacob, "we are in great danger of running where we are not sent; of doing that which we ought not to do; and of leaving undone that which we ought to do. Our salvation depends upon a true and living faith in the son of God, who said, 'ye are my friends if you do whatsoever things I command you.' He surely knows best what we should do, and when we should do it: this has always been the doctrine of Friends. Now suppose the Lord of the harvest calls a man to reap in his harvest on a given day; but he who is thus called thinks it is a weighty matter and has a great many things to do first, and, like Martha, is cumbered about much serving; so he lets the right time slip. By and by, he shoulders his sickle and goes out into the field after harvest, what is he then to do? he can only reap stubble. But suppose he is a very doing man, and he takes his scythe and cradle and goes into the field before the Lord of the harvest had told him to go, and *he tashes into the wheat before it is ripe, he toze mishtuf*, and the Lord says to him, "where are thy orders, who hath required this thing at thy hands?" The professor was silenced, having met with a

mouth and wisdom that he could not gainsay nor resist.

He related to a friend, some years ago, the following: "one day, I had some difficulty with one of my neighbours, and he let in hardness towards me, so that he would not speak when we met, and he would not shake hands with me. I felt very much cast down and distressed in my mind both day and night; so I cried inwardly to the Lord for deliverance out of this state, and that the unity and good feelings between us might be restored. One day, as I was sitting in meeting waiting in silence on the Lord, he put it into my heart to go to the man as soon as meeting ended; so before I had spoken to any one, or had eaten or drank I went in the faith and found my neighbor alone in the barn, threshing. He threw down his flail and looked very much surprised: we both stood still for some time, until tears began to run down my face; he then shed tears also. I told him of the great distress I had felt day and night; he said it had been the case with him too; so we made friends, and the unity was never again broken, for afterwards, when we met, we always had good feelings."

He related an occurrence, in reference to treating with offenders, that should be handed down to posterity. He said, "a Friend committed a breach against the good order and discipline of the Society, and justified himself in his offence. A committee were appointed to wait on him, but he was full of arguments in defence of his conduct—a party was forming in the monthly meeting, for he went about telling what he had said and what the committee had said, and some thought one thing, and some another. I felt my mind drawn in love and life to go with the committee to see him. Knowing very well that he would fortify himself with arguments against every thing that could be said to him, I told Friends that we were going to meet with a *crooket spharet*, (crooked spirit) that never could be overcome with words, so we must all be silent, and say nothing about the man's offence, for he knows very well what we are coming for. All he wants is for us to begin, and he will match it at once; but if he begins, let us help him out his own way as well as we can in brotherly kindness; but if we cannot, let us all be silent. So we went to see him, and he invited us into a room, and we all sat in solemn silence together,

until he became very uneasy and restless. We then conversed about other matters, and afterwards walked out, looked at his farm, and talked friendly together. So we came in and took tea, and after tea we sat in silence, in a feeling and tender state. We then concluded to order our horses and go, but he said, "Friends, not so, it is too late." So we consented and stayed all night, and in the morning, after breakfast, we sat down again in solemn silence, and were all much tendered together. When we had bid the family farewell, and had mounted our horses, he called us back, and said, "Friends, I am conquered; for I could not sleep last night. I had nothing but my conscience to war with, and it continually reproached me with having done wrong. Oh! Friends, I am willing to make any acknowledgment, if it will only atone for the evil I have done." I told him he had not much acknowledgment to make to Friends; if he could only make peace with his heavenly father, a very little would satisfy Friends. So we went back again, and he wrote an acknowledgment which we thought was more than enough, and when it was made right, we parted in much tenderness, and he gave the paper to the monthly meeting. It

was freely accepted, and peace and harmony was restored among Friends."

On one occasion during harvest time, on which account probably the meeting was unusually small, and Friends were very drowsy, Jacob stood up, and impressively cried out, "Friends, we must try to keep one another awake, or else we shall lose the life. To lose the life would be losing everything; the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." Friends felt the force of this brief exhortation, and the meeting was refreshed and enlivened.

During the Yearly meeting of 1827, Friends met in Green Street meeting-house to deliberate on the state of Society and to adopt such measures as, in the wisdom of truth, might appear suitable to extricate the body from the embarrassments into which it had been thrown, occasioned by the rash and intolerant conduct of some of its members.

The following statement relative to this event, furnished by a Friend, is here introduced without further comment:

"A short time after the Yearly meeting in 1827, Jacob Ritter informed a Friend, that in said meeting he could not hear what was said, (his hearing being heavy,) but he could *feel* that things were not right, that he was deeply tried, and in his distress remembered his younger years, his education in the Lutheran church, his convincement and the feelings which induced him to join this society; that in so doing, he had sacrificed much, endured many trials, and offended the friends of his youth, hoping and believing that he would here find a place of rest, a refuge from the storm until the close of his days. But he now felt that his hopes and expectations were gone, that the bond of unity was broken, and that he had no further interest with this people."

"He reflected with melancholy feelings on his disappointment, and lost estate; being, as he apprehended, now left alone and turned out in his old age like a pelican in the wilderness, or a sparrow upon the house top, with no society that he could unite with in religious fellowship.—Looking over the house, he concluded that he could never come into it any more, and, on the rising of the meeting, he went out and sauntered

along the street, until he arrived at a Friend's house. Upon going in, he found the family at tea and sat down with them, but could not eat; he therefore arose from the table, and again walked the streets for some time, in deep distress.—Coming to another Friend's door, and finding it open he walked in; observing Friends putting on their coats, he inquired where they were going. One of them answered, "to Green Street meeting-house:" he asked "what for?" and was told that the state of the Yearly Meeting had become so trying, and the Society involved in so much difficulty, that many Friends thought it right to assemble there in order to seek for a right opening, and to determine the proper course to be pursued under those affecting circumstances. On being asked if he would accompany them, he replied, "I will go," remarking at the same time, that they did not know his feelings, nor what he had been thinking of. He accordingly went and sat down with them in silence; and, in a short time, felt the same power to overshadow him, and the same concern and unity of feeling which first drew him to join this Society, and the evidence was so clear, that there was no room for doubt."

He also also added that at the Quarterly meeting at Horsham, a committee from the Yearly Meeting, appointed by a party out of the unity, attended, and introduced great difficulty and confusion. Jacob said he sat altogether quiet and easy in his mind, under a full assurance that the meeting would sustain its standing and testimonies, that he had seen to the end of the spirit of strife and confusion, and that truth would have the victory.

Towards the close of this interesting meeting, Jacob observed, "these trials are not new to me. I have passed through the furnace before and came out unhurt, and now I am ready to pass through it again: this is the same spirit of orthodoxy that got up in the church to which I once belonged, and disowned me; it always did and always will persecute the true seed, for its enmity is with the cross of Christ."

At a meeting in the sixth-month following, held in the same house, he expressed his faith in the Divine power that would deliver Friends out of all their trials. He added, "Friends should always be faithful to the truth, and never shrink

from it, though all the powers of the world should rise up against them." He also warned Friends of the danger of entering into contentions about faith and doctrine, as the spirit above alluded to was endeavouring to draw them into it to their hurt.

As this work may fall into the hands of persons not in religious profession with Friends, a brief explanation of the causes that produced the separation here alluded to, may not be out of place in these Memoirs. This cannot be better done, perhaps, than by presenting to the reader, the following extracts from epistles issued by our Yearly Meeting in reference to this event. It may be proper to add that the Society of Friends recognises but one rule of action as the fundamental law, or principle of christianity, viz: *the influence of Divine grace, or the spirit of Christ Jesus dwelling in, and operating upon the hearts of men.* It maintains, agreeably to the testimony of scripture, that this Divine influence is the gift of God, freely dispensed to every member of the human family; and that by a conformity of life to the dictates of this heavenly monitor and guide, Christ within, the hope of glory, the

Christian character is attained; the work of salvation is accomplished; and *by no other means*.

This doctrine, so plain, so rational, so comprehensive, and, at the same time, so scriptural, is, and has always been, the distinguishing tenet of Quakerism. And whatever may have been their former relations to the Society, all who have, in any degree, abandoned this simple ground of belief by attempting to introduce and establish other and supernumerary views of Christian obligation, have justly forfeited their claim to the title of *Friends*. To an obvious defection of this kind, as well as to the causes specified in the following extracts, may be traced the recent difficulties in our Society, and the origin of a disaffected party since known by the name of Orthodox Friends. This name it has received, in view of its former standing as a portion of the Society of Friends; and its present position, as having embraced some points of doctrine, and especially the outward views of Christian redemption esteemed by religious denominations generally as fundamental and orthodox. This body, since its organization, has, from time to time, instituted and propagated a variety of charges denunciatory of

the Christian standing of Friends. This, however, was to be expected from the new character which it had assumed. To these charges, allusion is made in the extracts here given. In an epistle issued in the fourth-month 1829, addressed "to the members of the religious society of Friends on the continent of America and elsewhere," the late division in our Society, and the causes which led to it, are thus briefly adverted to: "It is a subject of public notoriety, that a division has taken place in our religious society, accompanied by circumstances to which we reluctantly advert; but we apprehend ourselves called upon to do so, inasmuch as charges have been preferred against us, implicating our character as a Christian people, by those who once stood connected with us in religious fellowship.

The events to which we allude have had their origin, as we believe, in the same prolific cause of evil that has so often agitated the Christian world—a lust after power and pre-eminence in the church. Our religious society had long recognised in its disciplinary regulations, and in its practice, those excellent precepts of Christian fellowship and brotherly feeling, which the

blessed Jesus laid down for the observance of his disciples, when he said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise *dominion* over them, and they that are great exercise *authority* upon them, but *it shall not be so among you*, but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant." Matthew, xx. 25. And again, "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and *all ye are brethern*."—Matthew, xxiii. 8. As long as these commands were respected, and adhered to in practice, harmony prevailed among the members of the society—their violation was followed by discord and confusion.

Some influential individuals, long occupying conspicuous stations in the church, disregarding these precepts, found means to extend, from time to time, their power, and combining together, arrogated an authority over their fellow-members incompatible with their civil and religious rights. This authority once assumed, pretexts were soon found for its exercise, and hence an arbitrary rule of the *few* over the *many* was openly advocated and practically enforced. When men feel

power, and forget *right*, no precautions avail to prevent abuses. Neither our long established practice, nor our excellent discipline, could arrest the progress of this evil—the bonds of union were burst asunder, and a division of the society became inevitable.

In order to justify the course pursued, and cover the misrule that has thus divided the body, misrepresentation has, as is usual in such cases, been resorted to. Books and pamphlets have been issued from the press, and industriously circulated, impeaching our character as a Christian people!—some of them sanctioned by bodies professing to be Yearly Meetings of the Society of Friends. On the present occasion let it suffice to declare, that these high charges preferred against us, are destitute of any foundation in truth."

From an epistle addressed by our Yearly Meeting to that of Friends in London, the following is extracted:

"We are aware that our opponents have pronounced us infidels and deists! They have said we have departed from the Christian faith, and

renounced the religion of our worthy predecessors in the Truth. Nothing is easier than to make such charges as these; but in the present case we are happily assured that nothing is harder than to prove them. We are not sensible of any dereliction on our part from the principles laid down by our blessed Lord. The history of the birth, life, acts, death and resurrection of the Holy Jesus, *as in the volume of the Book it is written of him, we reverently believe.* We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe; neither do we hesitate to acknowledge the Divinity of its author, because we know from living experience, that he is the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God; that, under the present glorious dispensation, he is the *one* holy principle of Divine *life* and *light;* the unlimited *word* of grace and truth, which only can build us up in the true faith, and give us an inheritance among all those who are sanctified; neither are we sensible of any departure from the faith or principles of our primitive Friends.

"The charges brought against us by our opposers, to injure and invalidate our character as a

Christian people, are the same that were preferred against our primitive Friends, and, we apprehend, upon the same grounds. In that day, those who, like Diotrephes, loved to have the pre-eminence, could not bear to see a people rising up and bearing testimony to the truth and practical importance of that humbling doctrine; 'Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.' (MATT. 23 c., 8v.) We do not believe that the dissensions which have appeared amongst us had their origin so much in differences of opinion in doctrinal points, as in a disposition, apparent in some, to exercise an oppressive authority in the Church. These, in our meetings for discipline, although a small minority of the whole, assumed the power to direct a course of measures, painful to the feelings, and contrary to the deliberate judgment of their brethren. Thus the few usurped a power over the many, subversive to our established order, and destructive to the peace and harmony of society. After long and patient forbearance, in the hope that our opposing brethren might see the impropriety of such a course, the great body of the Yearly Meeting saw no way to regain a state of tranquillity, but

by a *disconnection* with those who had produced, and were promoting such disorders amongst us. By official accounts, which we believe to be nearly correct, from all parts of this Yearly Meeting, it appears that out of about *twenty-five* thousand adults and children, which composed it at the time of the division, about *eighteen thousand* remain in connection with this body."

To the foregoing it may be added that of 147 meetings which constituted the whole number, belonging to our Yearly Meeting at the time of the separation, 130 remained with Friends.—The minority, nevertheless, have assumed exclusive claim to the title as well as to the property of the Society; with what show of justice the reader, is, perhaps, by this time prepared to judge. The statistical details above furnished, are obtained from official documents, offered as evidence in the case of a law suit instituted soon after the period of the division by Orthodox Friends, who, not content with their relative proportion of the property, *which Friends have always been willing to accord them,* were resolved, by virtue of legal process, to appropriate the

whole to themselves. The law-suits have been generally concluded since 1829.

To the official statements here furnished, in reference to the cause of the late schism in our Society, may be added, the striking and forcible testimony with which the excellent subject of these memoirs concludes the narrative of his life, as given by himself:

"Now I am clear in the belief that had we all attended faithfully to the pure principle of light and life in our hearts and minds, these disputes and divisions would not have been among us; and I am convinced, that we never shall get back to the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace until we settle down in the everlasting silence, to the saving and redeeming principle in our own hearts; and blessed is he who attends strictly to its divine instructions and reproofs, which are the way of life and salvation."

About the time of the event here alluded to, Jacob Ritter, in company with my father Hugh Foulke, was engaged in a religious visit to the families of Friends, and others who had formerly been members of our Society, re-

siding between Gwynedd and Richland. While engaged in this service, he used great plainness of expression which was kindly received.

In one of these families, a young man manifested great uneasiness. (He indulged himself in biting a stick, and spitting and twisting various ways.) Jacob appeared not to notice the circumstance, but was careful to keep to the pointings of truth in his labors. Next morning, however, on rising early, as was his usual practice, and while deliberately engaged in dressing himself, he was heard to mutter:

"It was a crooked spharet, (spirit) it was an evil spharet, it would pite tat sthick and sphit it out agin, but oh! I had noting to do with it."

This amusing soliloquy was the first intimation that my father had that Jacob had noticed the circumstance above related. In the evening, while conversing on this subject, it was remarked, "that a man may easily betray himself by his motions and gestures, and give pain to others, when it would be wise for him to sit still and endeavor to overcome his mental conflicts;

that it is impossible to attain quietude and serenity of mind while indulging in bodily contortions ; that to sit, especially on occasions of Divine worship, in a careless and irreverent posture, indicated a vacant and thoughtless mind; and that those habits were equally at variance with civility and religion."

He frequently visited the meetings of Friends both for worship and discipline in Bucks, Montgomery, and Chester Counties in his own State, and also some parts of the State of New Jersey.

He labored assiduously for the promotion of salutary discipline in the church ; was a sincere lover of order and harmony, and often mourned over the declension in society from primitive simplicity in dress, language, &c.

He was particularly qualified to administer reproof without giving offence. In a neighbouring Quarterly meeting, he observed that Friends confined their appointments to a few members. He said, " Friends, I have taken notice it is here as it is too much the case at home, and in other places,—many gifted Friends

seem to have nothing to do, while others are overloaded with business. I have taken notice in this meeting that one Friend has been named on every committee, and this does not seem to be fair, for one man cannot do every thing. When I was a boy I heard a saying, that you must not fill the basket too full, or you will push the bottom out."

The following are memorandums of a concern which he expressed in a monthly meeting, viz: "If Friends would get down to the root and foundation and spring of life within themselves, there would be a different state of things among us, and our neighbours; we would be more careful to attend our meetings, and we should remember that the Lord looks on the heart, and not so much on a fine coat on our backs, or a fine horse or carriage, or on the outward appearance. Man looks on these and is liable to be proud, and in this state the Lord cannot be worshipped, for he beholdeth the proud afar off; and they who are in this state are always afar off from him, and he is not nigh in their hearts, as he would be if they were humble and low. I was brought up in a Society that taught me in my catechism,

when I was young, to renounce the Devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of the world; but as I grew up I found this catechism was but mere words, and was no more to me than as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal, and my heart was no better."

"Friends that are unfaithful to the teachings of the lip of truth, whose hearts and minds are in the world, and their thoughts running after fine dress, and fashionable appearances, who follow the world in its language, manners, and customs, are not a whit better than any other Society that is in the same spirit; for it will be found, as the lip of truth has declared, that wheresoever the treasure is, there will the heart be also, and wheresoever the carcase (or body) is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

He frequently exhorted Friends to be faithful in visiting one another in love, and especially to remember those who are beginning in the world, with young families around them. These had many difficulties and temptations to encounter, and often required the attention and sympathy of their brethren.

In the year 1829, he attended Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Here he attracted considerable attention. His original ideas, his apt comparisons, the relation of his sufferings and preservations communicated in broken English, joined to his innocent and unassuming manners, imparted much interest to his religious labors.

During this visit, an eminent minister, a member of the meeting for sufferings in Baltimore, observed that he did not approve of Friends running after popular preachers to hear eloquent orations, &c., but that he felt a strong inclination to hear Jacob Ritter. On being asked his reason, he said, that Jacob attended their meeting for sufferings the other evening, and said, "when I was a boy, they set me to keep the sheep, and so they called me the sheep boy, and I took notice in the spring of the year, when there was a cold easterly storm, the ewes would stand over the lambs to keep the storm off. And I want this meeting for sufferings to stand over the lambs to keep the storm off." This seasonable hint, the Friend remarked, was of such weight and value that he would not soon forget it.

He afterwards attended New York Yearly Meeting. Of his services on this occasion, his companion gave an interesting account. Some time after this, a member of that meeting, in the course of a religious visit, called to see Jacob Ritter. He found him very unwell, and apparently under some depression of mind, but, encouraged by the kind and cheerful conversation of the Friend, his drooping spirits revived. He shed tears, and inquired after a number of Friends in New York who had shown much kindness to him, and expressed his thankfulness that Friends should remember him, and that they should come to see a poor old man. He was reminded that it was such as *he* the Apostle alluded to when he said, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" James 2c., 5v.

His visiter asked him, if he remembered the good advice he had given to Friends, at the last sitting of the Yearly Meeting in New York. He answered, "No, I don't now remember ever doing much good." The Friend replied, "It having been observed that we had a very good

meeting, thou said, "I think too Friends, we have had a good meeting, and we should be thankful for it: for it is what we cannot command in our own will, or by our own wisdom. Bnt we should all remember, that a good meeting, like every other good thing from the Father of mercies, brings forth good fruits; now let us all remember friends, and take some of the good home to our neighbors."

Jacob brightened up, and inquired, "but did you obey?" It was answered that many Friends bore it in mind, and it was believed that the hint had been useful; that after meeting the general query among Friends was, what good thing they should take home to their neighbors.

It has been already remarked that he seldom travelled long journeys in the work of the ministry. He once went to the state of Ohio, but his business being of a temporal nature, he did not ask for a minute. On mentioning his prospect to the monthly meeting, he was encouraged to attend the regular meetings for worship and discipline, as way opened in the course of his journey,

he being well known by many Friends in that part of the country.

He attended the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders in 1840. The business of this meeting was conducted in much harmony: brotherly affection was felt to abound as is frequently the case on these occasions when Friends, whose residences are remote from each other, are thus convened together. This feeling brought out more expression than was believed to be profitable, and it was suggested by some Friends, that more inward and silent retirement would contribute to the best interests of the meeting. Jacob remarked, "that a prudent mother who had a number of children around her, while she was careful to provide bread enough for her family, would always deal it out sparingly, that none should go to waste, that all said in meetings not really needed, however good it might be in itself, was wasting bread that might be wanted in the time of need. In the Father's house there is always bread enough and to spare, but never any to waste."

While attending the Yearly Meeting, he was

taken very unwell, and returned home. Before the meeting concluded, it was reported in Philadelphia that he was dead. A Friend who had heard the report hastened home and went to his house. He found Jacob sitting under his piazza, weak but pretty well recovered: the Friend told him it was reported, "he was dead;" he answered, "I am dead to sin." On which the Friend observed, that many people considered a being dead to sin a state of perfection, that could not be attained in this life. To this, (as he had at other times frequently observed in relation to the doctrine of perfection,) he answered in substance:

"Ah! I did not say it boastingly, (his being dead to sin,) but I have not served a hard Master, and I know he loves me; and he has preserved me in many great dangers, and severe hardships. Now, for several years past, I have not felt any thing laid to my charge, for I have endeavoured night and day to do his will, insomuch that it has been my meat and my drink to do my Heavenly Father's will; but the murmurer who pleaded that he had served a hard master, and who had not improved his talent, was not ad-

mitted into the kingdom, but was cast into outer darkness, where there was weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth."

About the year 1840, a number of barns in his neighbourhood were burnt by lightning. A Friend having alluded to the loss and distress occasioned by this awful visitation, he said in a solemn manner, " that he had an inward sense of it; and that these dispensations of the Almighty were not designed for evil but for good: for when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants thereof learn righteousness."

About six months before his decease, he attended the Yearly Meeting of 1841, and appeared to enjoy good health and spirits. It may here be observed that for several years his hearing was very dull; but it was remarkable that he would, notwithstanding, speak pertinently to the business of the meetings. In this meeting he discovered that there was some difficulty in relation to the language of a paper under consideration. He had a particular objection to criticisms about words; his principal concern

was *the life*. His remarks on this occasion were as follows:

"I can remember very well when this Yearly Meeting was held in Pine street, and I thought there were great and good men belonged to it—but in regard to writing epistles, they could not agree; though I thought at that time, that they could spin out a story pretty long, and write very well, and so on; but when it was read in the Yearly Meeting, one would have a word scratched out here and another there, but it made hackling work—too many cooks spoil the broth."

At the Monthly meeting held at Plymouth in the seventh-month, 1841, he was very clear and favored in his ministry. His observations in the meeeting for discipline were impressive, and brought solemnity over the minds of Friends.—A concern was expressed that our approaching Quarterly meeting might be held to the comfort of Friends; that the members might endeavour, as much as possible, to keep their seats, and to avoid conversation in and about the yard, as a contrary behaviour was disorderly, and had an

unsettling tendency. Jacob addressed the meeting in substance as follows :

"I have long considered worship as the most solemn act we can engage in ; and when we go to meetings, either for worship or discipline, we should remember, we are professing to do the Lord's work, and not man's. Now it is a great favor that we are permitted to take part in such a work, and are called to it: we are here called to the house of prayer. I have been thinking in this meeting, what would the king, or the president, or a great man of the earth think of us, if we had a petition to make to him, and we should come in before him in a light manner, and busy ourselves about other matters besides our petition, and misbehave ourselves before him, what would he think of us? Or if we were to go to sleep before him, could we expect in reason he would grant us our petition? Oh! Friends, if these things are so when we come before a man like ourselves, our fellow-worm, what will become of us in the day of solemn account, when we come before the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords?"

On his way home from a funeral a little before his decease, he said to a Friend, "I believe my time is now very short in this world; and when I am gone, if thou hast any of the management or direction about my funeral, I desire that my interment may not take place too soon."

He attended Plymouth meeting on first-day, the 28th of the eleventh-month, 1841, and appeared in the ministry with clearness, and much to the comfort and satisfaction of Friends. This was the last meeting he attended.

On third-day the 30th, he was taken very unwell, and from this time, continued gradually to decline for about two weeks.

A few days before his departure, two Friends called to see him. He greeted them affectionately, and desired to be raised upon the bed. After a pause, he said, in a firm distinct voice,—"I have seen, as it were, all the world of mankind before me; and they that repent, and are favored to overcome their own stubborn wills, shall live and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. But they that will not repent must die."

L. of C.

One of the Friends remarked, "that it was a great consolation that his Divine Master was with him; that it reminded him of some of the last expressions of a beloved Friend, lately deceased, who had quoted the promise of our Saviour to his disciples, and who had felt at that solemn time, that this promise applied to himself, viz: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

After a pause, he said in a very feeling manner, "yes, it is true in my case, and though my bodily sufferings are very great, yet I am mercifully supported under them; and I know they are refining and preparing me for a state of everlasting rest and happiness."

Soon after this, two other Friends visited him and found him apparently asleep, but suffering under great difficulty of breathing. After he awoke, seeing the Friends, he said, "Oh! I am glad to see you:" and after a little pause, added, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

The following memorandums were made by

two Friends who had assisted in the care of him during his illness. From these, it appears, that one prominent feature in his character was preserved to the last, viz : "A remarkable exemption from any thing like self-righteousness." On one occasion, on parting with some Friends who had come to see him, he said, "It is profitable for Friends to visit one another in the life," and on several occasions he repeated the admonition, "mind the light."

"As his means of living had been truly exemplary in dress and furniture, setting a good example himself, so in his last illness he was often led to make solid remarks on these subjects. He said he had abused himself in younger life by excessive labor, and too much ambition to obtain a livelihood; that he now felt the effects of his former abuses of the good gifts of Heaven, and that his suffering was increased by it; he admonished those around him not to do so, that it bespoke a manifest want of faith in the promise from the lip of truth.

"His affectionate admonition to all Friends every where was to exercise forbearance towards

those who had transgressed the discipline, observing that the kingdom of Christ comes by entreaty and not by force; and in relation to persons under convincement, he was desirous that patience might have its perfect work, and that they should be treated with love and tenderness.

"He expressed an earnest desire that Friends might be preserved from, and keep out of the spirit of the world, and all its commotions, and that all Friends every where should be faithful, and not suffer the fear of man to prevent them from doing the will of their Creator.

"As his end drew near, he said, "I feel that the truth and seed of life has the dominion and reigns in me. Oh! that the babe of immortal life might be brought forth, and be nourished, and have the dominion in all people; how kind then would they be to one another."

"His words were seas oned with grace, and his mind was preserved in a heavenly calm to the last; and in this undisturbed and peaceful state, he continued until one o'clock in the after-

noon of fourth-day, the fifteenth of the twelfth-month, 1841, when he passed quietly away, in the eighty-fifth year of his age, and resigned his spirit to him who gave it. He was a minister about fifty years, and a member of this meeting nearly twenty-nine.

His remains were interred in Friends' burial ground at Plymouth on seventh-day the eighteenth of the month, on which solemn occasion, a meeting for worship was held after the interment."

RECAPITULATION.

On reviewing the life, character and religious experiences of Jacob Ritter, together with the merciful display of the Divine power in preserving him in his greatest extremities, and delivering him out of all his dangers; and finally, after leading him safely along to old age, taking the dominion and reigning over all in him, while he was passing through the valley of the shadow of death, we discover much for edification and comfort. 1 Cor. xiv. 3. Hence it becomes the duty of those who knew him, and were his brethren in the same spiritual relationship, to be faithful to the injunction, "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

In him, we see the character of the Apostles, their experience, and the promise of Christ exemplified. They said, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee." Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or parents, or brethren or wife or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not re-

ceive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting." Luke xviii. 28, 29, 30.

Jacob Ritter had not received a scholastic education; he had not been instructed in the rules of theology; he had not, like Paul, been brought up at the feet of a Gamaliel. But the religion that Paul learned in that school, was at enmity with the cross of Christ; and he knew nothing of the Gospel "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," Gal. i., 12.: nay, he counted the righteousness which was in the law, and all things with it (by comparison), but dross and dung that he might win Christ. Philemon iii. 8.

Jacob, when thirteen years of age, had not received instruction by which he had been taught even the being of God; but when he beheld the starry firmament and changing clouds, his young untutored mind thought, "surely there must be some great power, that created and formed all these things;" and though he had often felt the secret touches of Divine love, yet he wist not what it was.

Soon after this he beheld in the visions of Light, the heavenly city, and was shown that he must enter this city by Christ; this accords with the declaration: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John x. 1. Again, he saw that this heavenly city needed not the light of the sun, nor of the moon, for Christ is the light thereof.

When he was about sixteen, while standing alone in the woods in solemn silence, a sight and sense came over him of the horrors of war; but he did not know the meaning of it.

When he was about twenty years of age, there was a muster of the militia in his neighborhood; and he was taught by the minister of the church to which he belonged the propriety and necessity of standing in defence of his country against her enemies; and he was finally prevailed upon, against his better judgment, to join the army.

He now experienced a pause somewhat similar, though under very different circumstances,

to the solemn silence that came over him while standing alone in the woods when he was sixteen years of age; it was indeed its painful counterpart: "an awful pause" he says, (alluding to the battle of Brandywine,) "preceded the engagement." Here he was taken prisoner and brutally beaten. War-worn and weary, he was driven to Philadelphia, and turned into prison with about nine hundred men. In this prison, he suffered almost all the privations and cruelty that we can conceive human nature capable of enduring.

It may be here mentioned more fully than is recited in his journal, and as he frequently related, that in all his sufferings in prison he was never wholly forsaken by the Divine presence; that though he felt keen remorse for his disobedience to clear manifestations of duty in entering into the army, yet in compliance with what he believed to be his duty, he prostrated himself on the ground every evening, and implored the Father of mercies for forgiveness. "I laid myself down and begged" said he; and in one of these mental fervent intercessions, he received the assurance of Divine pardon, accompanied

by a promise of deliverance which gave him new life.

He was in awful perils when the yellow fever was raging in the city of Philadelphia in the year 1793; but he saw the finger of God in this dispensation of his judgments, and cast all his care and dependence upon Him, who mercifully preserved him, and raised him from the bed of sickness when that malignant epidemic was upon him.

Twice he was in perils among false brethren who, in the first instance, denounced him as a reprobate, and in the second, as an unbeliever and a heretic. As the same spirit, in the same manner, accused Paul formerly; so he, like Paul, declared that after the way which they called heresy, so worshipped he the God of his fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: and again, "they could not prove the things whereof they accused him." Acts xxiv. 13, 14.

But through all his trials he maintained the doctrine of the common salvation, and according

to the Apostolic exhortation, contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, Jude iii, saying, by the expressive language of example, and by his blameless life and conversation among men, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Acts xx. 24.

Like Job, "he died, being old and full of days." We who are left behind, are sensible that a faithful standard bearer has been removed. We feel the privation, yet not without the cheering hope that our loss is his eternal gain. This hope is confirmed by his dying words, viz: "I feel that the truth and seed of life has the dominion and reigns in me." Oh! such a testimony at such a time naturally inspires in us who are left behind the ejaculation of one formerly: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

To conclude, as his life was in some respects similar to that of the apostle, so, we believe,

the declaration of the latter when he drew near the solemn close, might have been fully adopted by the subject of these memoirs: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2. Tim. iv. 7, 8.

THE END.

JUN 26 1903

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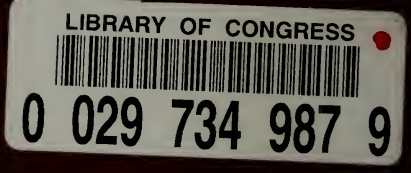
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